

Street SCENE

MONDAY, AUGUST 29, 1994

STREET SOUNDS

No Shoes, Shirt, Exceptions — The Exceptions

The Exceptions give new breadth to the term eclectic. Metal, jazz and hip-hop (to name a few) make cameo appearances throughout "No Shoes, No Shirt, No Exceptions," (Icon/Moon Records) with a bizarre ska/reggae/synth fusion mutation holding the album together. Arrangements are entirely non-linear, with no attempt at the cohesiveness invariably found in pop rock.

Lyrics are cleverly written and generally tongue-in-cheek. Song titles, such as "I Hate Mornings," "Coney Dog City," "I Hate You" and its sequel, "I Hate You II," are indicative of the group's sense of humor. The serious subject of bigotry is broached, albeit sardonically, with "Illiterate White Trash."

The album also contains a couple of instrumentals which showcase the band's impressive musicianship. The horn section, composed of trombonist Jim Hofer, saxophonist Gene Corwin, and trumpet player/organist Todd Bolton, displays an aptitude for smooth, melodic, "pop" style harmony with the song "Dear Diary." More often, though, they churn out complex, syncopated and sometimes dissonant riffs. Perhaps there's a Miles Davis influence amidst the myriad of styles?

The rhythm section is Chuck Bartels and Tony Barragan on bass and drums, respectively, with Ryan Reeves on guitar. Keeping up with the chaotic changes in meter and style is their primary job, and they do it admirably. Singer Johnny Williams presents a quirky vocal style with more personality than virtuosity, but entirely fitting for the band.

The Exceptions' ethnicity is as diverse as its music. Mexican, African and Native American — along with a few Caucasians — round out the lineup. There are, however, no females.

According to their press release The Exceptions have worked with such reggae/ska and underground luminaries as Blim Skals Blim, The Dead Milkmen and Murphy's Law. They are also endorsed by The Mighty Mighty Bosstones' mighty singer, Dicky Barrett.

"No Shoes, No Shirt, No Exceptions," The Exceptions first full-length release, is a strong, tightly produced effort in the manic world of alternative rock.

(The Exceptions play the Falcon Club, 3515 Caniff, Hampton, on Sunday, Sept. 4, with the Skeletons (313) 568-6010.) — Matthew Delezenne

G. Love and Special Sauce — G. Love and Special Sauce

The recipe for this sauce is a blend of blues, hip-hop, funk and jazz. It doesn't sound like a very appealing meal, but G. Love and Special Sauce's self-titled debut (Epic Records) makes for a tasty treat.

With his slicked back curly black locks, G. Love and his laid-back rapping over bluesy jazz riffs could replace Harry Connick Jr. as crooner de jour. In the slow groovy "Baby's Got Sauce," G. Love portrays the man that every woman dreams of. "I'll always stop by, if you like me, too. I'll do anything that you could ever want for me to do. A kiss for some of this. A smile and it's done."

He shares it with a little apprehension: "Please don't tell my friends about the situation. They think I'm on some extended vacation. I don't get out to see my boys anymore. Only time I leave the house is to go to the store for what the want."

In the Back-like rap "Gold Reverence," G. Love sings the praises of A&W root beer floats, lemonade, Sprite and Kool-Aid.

By far, the most revealing track is "Blues Music" where they offer a quick lesson into the mind of G. Love and Special Sauce: "Me and my band all must agree we like to get groovy with the sounds of the old time... Going way back from where the music really started."

"The music is so eclectic on this record that radio stations and MTV, unfortunately, probably won't pick up on it. Nonetheless, this is one of the best albums to be released so far this year."

— Christina Fuoco

Ain't Enough Comin' In — Otis Rush

Outside of, perhaps, Buddy Guy, there is no more revered a torchbearer of the classic Chicago blues tradition than the estimable Otis Rush. His Mercury Records debut, in addition to being the first studio album he's released since 1965, stands as near equal to his legendary Cobra and later Delmark recordings, which is to say that, at 60, he's just as inspired as he was nearly 60 years ago.

From the opening guitar lines of Albert King's "Don't Burn Down the Bridge," it's obvious that Otis Rush came here to make a few points. That legendary guitar playing prowess has only improved to the point of being unbelieveably brilliant over the years. Otis Rush, he's kept going. Unlike his Chicago brethren, Rush has always been known as both one of the finest guitarists to ever strum a note and as one of the classic vocalists of all time. The fact that he sounds so sharp here seems as no surprise.

See 69B, 7A

Bloodline: It's all in the genes

■ Any band whose members are children of classic rock legends is bound to get a lot of attention. But Bloodline is hoping to rest on their laurels with the release of their self-titled debut CD.

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER



Bloodline is a marketing person's dream. Comprised of the offspring of musicians Berry Oakley, Miles Davis and Robbie Krieger, it sounds like one of those bands created by money- and publicity-hungry producers.

But there's nothing contrived about Bloodline, said Berry Oakley Jr., the band's lead singer/bassist and son of the late Allman Brothers bass player.

He and guitarist Waylon Krieger, son of the Doors' Robbie Krieger, are childhood friends who founded Bloodline with 17-year-old guitar ace "Smokin' Joe" Bonamassa after they met at a show. Drummer Erin Davis, the 23-year-old son of jazz legend Miles Davis, was brought into the band by original Bloodline singer Aaron Hagar, whose dad Sammy is Van Halen's lead singer. The band is rounded out by keyboardist Lou Segreti, 40.

"I grew up mostly around Waylon's house," said Oakley about his long-time friendship with Krieger. "We just kind of learned to play together."

Since forming three years ago, Bloodline has been touring while working on a record deal and building a following. With the novelty of their family history behind them, Bloodline is hoping to prove that they're a genuine talent. The band's self-titled debut album was released on EMI Records last week.

"We took three years to get ready for it; we're happy with what came out," Oakley said. "All of us are really different. We're into really wacky stuff. A lot of us are into the hardcore blues... there's a lot of diversity."

Influences show

The band members' wide range of musical influences is reflected on their CD, which was produced by Joe Hardy (ZZ Top, Steve Earle, Jeff Healey). Oakley's growling, bluesy voice possesses a hint of Jim Morrison. Bonamassa — who has opened for B.B. King, Buddy Guy, John Lee Hooker, Danny Gatton and Robert Cray — seems to have



In the blood: Partially comprised of sons of pop and jazz legends, Bloodline includes Waylon Krieger, Erin Davis, Smokin' Joe Bonamassa, Lou Segreti and Berry Oakley Jr.

patterned his style after late guitar great Stevie Ray Vaughan.

Their music — a mix of Southern rock, funk and straight-ahead rock'n'roll — isn't what is topping the charts now but Oakley said he's still optimistic about Bloodline's success.

"It's not the type of music that's out there today. If it's not alternative or pop nobody wants to hear it," said the 21-year-old Oakley.

It's only natural that Oakley and the 20-year-old Krieger bring a bit of their fathers' legacies into Bloodline. Oakley's father was killed in a motorcycle accident before he was born. Having formerly been married to Doors drummer John Densmore, Oakley's mother and ex-Doors guitarist Robbie Krieger remained close friends.

As a consequence, Oakley and Waylon Krieger were "thrown together" by their parents from an early age. When the duo was in their teens, Robbie Krieger invited them to play in and eventually tour with his band. Oakley assumed lead vocals during Doors tunes like "Love Me Two Times." It was there that he picked up on the Jim Morrison

influence — and imitation.

"I got to fake being Jim Morrison. After two years, I had it down," he said. "Actually, one time at a club in New York City people were calling me Jim. I was really into it. It was my mistake... wearing all black."

Sometimes, he admitted, he prompted the comments — "We'd walk around and tell people that Jim is alive... weird stuff like that."

Regardless, it proved to be a "good lesson in life. I got to see a lot in that two years."

Impressive performance

One person they saw was Bonamassa, then about 16 years old, playing at a Leon Fender tribute concert. Already a seven-year veteran of the blues scene, Bonamassa impressed Waylon and Krieger.

"My father had a band. What I would do is sit in with his band and basically took it from there," Bonamassa said. "One thing lead to another."

Although a few magazines have lauded him as "the next Stevie Ray Vaughan," Bonamassa said he takes

all the attention in stride.

"I just didn't expect it," Bonamassa said about the attention. "It just came out of nowhere. I take it for what it is."

The Utica, N.Y., native doesn't regret giving up his school years for the attention.

"Hey, you got to take chances when you can get it. Lucky is the person who ever gets the opportunity to be in the position where I am now. I put those things aside. This is my time."

Oakley said he realizes that a lot of people come out just to get a peek at the music legends' kids.

"It goes both ways. You get a lot of people who are just hecklers, and scream 'Play Whipping Post' throughout the whole set," he said. "We also get a lot of really cool people who come out because they're curious. We're a real Southern rock/blues type of band. We turn them into Bloodline fans."

Bloodline plays The Ritz, 17580

Frazho, Roseville, at 9 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 1. Tickets are \$5. For more information, call (810) 778-6404.



Funked up: General Clusterfunk includes Tom Wilber, Mark Anderson, Jason Van Doorn, Russ Epker and Joey Bowen.

Clusterfunk strong on 'Starin'

BY MATTHEW DELEZENNE
STAFF WRITER

The play on words from which General Clusterfunk derives its name is indicative of the spirit of the band's debut CD "Starin' Straight at the Sun." A sense of spontaneity, sadly lacking in so many bands, flows throughout the 14-song effort. Even the ballad "In My Heart," dedicated to the memory of guitar legend Stevie Ray Vaughan, sounds as if it were written on the day he died.

General Clusterfunk could be described as a Motown version of the Red Hot Chili Peppers — with fewer tattoos and more soul. In fact, Chili Pepper drummer and former Birmingham resident Chad Smith played some of the drums on the disc.

"Chad just did it out of the kindness of his heart" (guitarist Russ Epker) has known him forever," said

singer Joey Bowen of Smith, the ex-drummer for Detroit's Toby Road.

Musically, General Clusterfunk simply has no weak points. Epker and Bowen, along with guitarist Jason Van Doorn, are backed up by drummer Mark Anderson and bassist Toa Wilber. Bowen also plays harmonica and keyboards.

Blending R&B, blues and rock into an electric funk, "Starin' Straight at the Sun" is the perfect soundtrack for a mid-summer's night bash.

The disc kicks off with "Never Goin' Back," an in-your-face rock'n'roller which declares substance abuse in no uncertain terms. Consciousness of societal decay can be found in the funky groove of "Fire in the House" while the previously mentioned "In My Heart" demonstrates a sensitivity in the band.

The overall message, however, is

clearly defined in such tunes as "Celebrate a Good Lovin'," "Sweet Thang," "Live" and the title track. The music is blue-eyed party funk at its finest.

Lyrically, General Clusterfunk isn't exactly the Leonard Cohen of rock, but, then again, one doesn't go to a party to ponder the future of democracy.

The band was formed in June 1993 when Bowen and Epker began writing songs together. They asked Wilber, a former bandmate of Bowen's, to play bass on an informal 8-track recording they were doing and ended up with Chili Pepper Smith laying down the drum tracks.

"So it was like we were just writing songs," Bowen said. "We'd even thought about the band thing."

See CLUSTERFUNK, 7A

Information on limited engagements only should be submitted two weeks in advance to Christina Fuoco, 32851 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or by fax at (313) 591-7878.

Exact address and phone numbers with area codes must be included.

Monday, Aug. 29

LARRY HARRIS
Capitol 8, 21736 Plymouth Road, Livonia.
(313) 291-3430

Tuesday, Aug. 30

ALAN PERAZICH
21736 Plymouth Road, Livonia
(313) 291-3430

IN CONCERT

SHARON RED
Michigan State Fair, 1120 State Fair at
(313) 350-6200

STEVIE NICKS
2-3, 1815 N. Main St., Royal Oak, (MI) 48067
(313) 555-3344

Wednesday, Aug. 31

Big Fish, 700 Town Center Drive, Dearborn.
(313) 226-6300

SHARON RED
Five Knots Music Theatre, 178 and Berke-
shire Road, Independence Township, (MI) 48137
(313) 577-0100

BROTHERS BROS
Band #2, 200-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor.
(313) 960-8000

PETE DINKS
A.F.B., 18052 Woodward Ave., south of
Greenbelt Road, Detroit, (MI) 48224
(313) 822-0714

SHARON RED
The Ritz, 17580 Frazho, Roseville, (MI) 48064
(810) 778-6404

Thursday, Sept. 1

LARRY HARRIS
with Big Chief at Five Knots Music Theatre,
(MI) 48137

JANE BUCK
(810) 377-0100

SEXY SENSATIONS
with Cross Country and The No-Boys Band
at Oakland University's Meadow Brook Mu-
sic Festival, 17500 Woodward and Adams
Road, Rochester, (MI) 48063
(810) 377-0100

SHARON RED
with John Waters Harding at The Majestic,
4140 Woodward Ave., Detroit, (MI) 48224
(313) 863-7880

SHARON RED
The Ritz, 17580 Frazho, Roseville, (MI) 48064
(810) 778-6404

SHARON RED
with Big Chief at Five Knots Music Theatre,
(MI) 48137

SHARON RED
with Big Chief at Five Knots Music Theatre,
(MI) 48137

See IN CONCERT, 7A